

This Master Plan offers a bold vision for Downtown Lincoln's future — a vision based on the ideas, values, and dreams of a diverse community. It is a vision rooted in an appreciation of Downtown's legacy within the history of our City and State. It seeks to ensure a vibrant and healthy Downtown that continues to enrich Lincoln's economic, social, and cultural foundations for generations to come.

The Master Plan lays out both a *short term plan* providing direction for immediate private and public investment opportunities, as well as a *long term plan* providing guidance for actions and decisions that will shape downtown and Lincoln for the next 20 to 30 years. The Plan is intended to sustain a place many will call home; a place where legions of our residents will work and seek an education; a place providing entertainment, recreation, and culture for people of many backgrounds and interests; in short, a vibrant, active neighborhood which residents from all parts of our community will be proud to call their downtown.

Just as the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan guides City and County growth, the Master Plan offers official recognition to a common vision for Downtown Lincoln's future. By identifying a long term vision, the Plan provides a starting point for developing the downtown we would like Lincoln to have in 2025 and beyond. This vision will guide hundreds of decisions, big and small. It provides direction for spending public funds as well as stimulating private investments. The Plan sets the framework from which issues will be evaluated and decisions made.

Much as the previous 1974 Master Plan guided downtown for the past 30 years, transforming downtown from a retail hub for the city into a mixed use center, the 2005 Master Plan charts Downtown's course for the next 20 to 30 years. The 2005 Master Plan envisions a downtown that:

- ▶ serves as the employment, entertainment and educational hub of the community
- ▶ maintains and strengthens the governmental functions for city, county, state, and federal governments
- ▶ develops a vibrant retail presence
- ▶ secures continuing entertainment, recreational, and cultural opportunities
- ▶ offers expanded housing opportunities and types
- ▶ offers significant new public community space
- ▶ provides increased transportation choices for Lincoln residents, workers and visitors
- ▶ links and enhances city-wide trails and open space
- ▶ accommodates future convention and arena needs for the region

This Master Plan has been amended into the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan as an official subarea plan. Its implementation must be purposefully flexible and responsive to future opportunities and constraints, many of which cannot be anticipated at this time, but will further shape our downtown.

Downtown's mix of land uses, building massing, developmental history, and diversity of ownership creates a truly unique planning environment. While other subarea plans may assume singular oversight for an area, the Downtown Master Plan must blend the plans and aspirations embodied in other planning and implementation efforts that have preceded it. Some existing plans and regulations will need to be studied in light of the Downtown Master Plan's vision with refinements made to this Plan and to others that reflect a common community view. The Master Plan's proposed Design Guidelines will also be evaluated and implemented with consideration for and within the context of existing policies and procedures, e.g., historic districts and Capitol Environs Plans.

As Yogi Berra once said, "If you don't know where you are going, you may not get there." The Downtown Master Plan provides a vision of a vital, vibrant, people-friendly downtown Lincoln and sets guideposts we can use over the next many decades to realize this vision.